

*Days 12–18*

# *Counting our Way to Shavuot*

AND MAKING IT COUNT FOR OUR LIVES

## **Introduction**

A handout for counting the 49 days to Shavuot will be available each Shabbat and will contain a verse or two selected from each of the 66 books of the Bible for each day. A brief comment on the selected text is given, along with a few introspective questions in order to help initiate personal reflection on the biblical text as well as open discussion on an individual or group basis.

There is space on each daily page for writing down your thoughts as you consider the application of the selected text and how it could be applied personally, shared with another individual, or incorporated into family time or in a small group setting.

The icons on each page will remind you to consider an application of the verse, first for yourself, then for someone you may be discipling or with whom you have regular conversation, and finally with your family and/or a small group.



In this space, jot down thoughts about how the meaning of the chosen biblical text applies to your own life, and how you can incorporate its truth in your walk with the Lord.



Here you can list people you want to remember in prayer today and perhaps be able to share encouragement related to today's verse(s).



This is a place to write some thoughts on how the topic could be discussed with your family at dinner time, or with friends you may see, or in a small group study session.

## היום שנים עשר לעומר – Day Twelve

And they observed the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy, for the LORD had caused them to rejoice, and had turned the heart of the king of Assyria toward them to encourage them in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel. Ezra 6:22

**“Be strong and let your heart take courage, all you who hope in the LORD. (Psalms 31.24)”**

How has the Lord encouraged you? Have you built and maintained a daily prayer and praise habit? If the Lord inhabits the praises of His people, could your lack of worship be part of what is lacking in His felt presence in your life? Take courage! Hope in the LORD.

What might happen if you added one thing to a list of thankfulness offered to God daily? Give it a try... Write out a question to ask yourself relating to this topic or answer the one we have provided. Consider someone with whom you can share your thoughts, or how could share them with your family or with a small group.

- Is it easy for you to worship and sing to the LORD? What could you do today to add thankfulness to your normal routine (if you are doing well - could you add one)?
- Consider the verse below from Zephaniah together. Does God really rejoice over us? What do His “shouts of joy” sound like? Is there a way for us to listen closer to His creation and revelation so that we hear Him and how He is relating with us? How can we do this together?



Making it personal

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The LORD your God is in your midst, a victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy. (Zephaniah 3.17)

## Day Thirteen – הַיּוֹם שְׁלֹשָׁה עָשָׂר לְעֹמֶר

You, in Your great compassion, did not forsake them in the wilderness; the pillar of cloud did not leave them by day, to guide them on their way, nor the pillar of fire by night, to light for them the way in which they were to go. You gave Your good Spirit to instruct them, your manna You did not withhold from their mouth, and You gave them water for their thirst. Nehemiah 9:19–20

### “Lights, camera, action!”

If we saw all of the historical narratives as movies would we be any nearer to God? We tend to think that our lacking in love and faith is just because we don't see things with enough clarity. Technology might serve us to “bring to life” these events but do we really need all the media choices presented to us? God goes beyond even the written word—he gives us His Spirit to enliven His truth.

How can we trust and rely on God to bring to life His word by the power of His Spirit?

- As I trust in the Spirit of God to work in me and through me, how do I know His fruit is the real thing?
- Do you see the reality of the Spirit in other's lives? How might you make a simple acknowledgment of this with another?
- The fruit of the Spirit is a real demonstration of the work of the Spirit in our relationships. List them out below and find a creative way to discuss them with others today.



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But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (Galatians 5.22–23)

# Day Fourteen, 2 Weeks – הַיּוֹם אַרְבַּעַה עָשָׂר לְעֹמֶר

For the Jews there was light and gladness  
and joy and honor. Esther 8:16

## “R.E.S.P.E.C.T”

Honor and respect are similar things. What do they mean to you? Now respect is defined as, “a feeling of deep admiration for someone or something elicited by their abilities, qualities, or achievements.” God’s actions for His people in the times of Esther brought light, gladness, joy and honor. They felt and experienced God’s value of them.

How do we communicate honor to others?

- In the gospel we learn that God lavished His love on sinners while they were still in their sin. How do you experience God’s forgiveness and sense that He values you? Do you feel like His treasured possession? If not, cry out to Him and express it.
- Who is someone you respect and honor? How might you express that to them today?
- Consider the command for parents to teach their children and children to honor their parents. Read together (Eph 6:1-3 and Deut 11:19-21). How do both the responses of parents and children, to do and to honor, related to the promise of the Land?



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You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers to give them, as long as the heavens are above the earth. (Deuteronomy 11.19–21 ESV)

## Day Fifteen – הַיּוֹם הַחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר לְעֹמֶר

As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last  
He will take His stand on the earth. Job 19:25

### “Stand for Something or You’ll Fall for Anything”

Job suffered incredible hardship but his faith in God did not waiver. He held firm to the reality that His Redeemer was the Living God who could not be overcome by evil. Calamity could not overcome Him and neither will it in our lives.

Can you stand firm in faith even when life presses down hard?

- Our faith is in God, not in our gold. One letter difference can make all the difference. Are there any “extra letters” weighing you down? Acknowledge God in this way and lean on Him. How can you do that today?
- How can you come along side of someone like Job in your life without saying too much? What words could encourage even those who are heavy laden?
- What do we know about the coming Kingdom of God? Find and discuss things that we know for sure will happen and discuss how a “now but not yet” understanding of God’s Kingdom realities helps us take a stand for what is true.



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O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Yeshua Messiah. (1 Corinthians 15:55–57)

## Day Sixteen – הַיּוֹם שֶׁשָׁה עֶשֶׂר לְעֹמֶר –

Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God; Let Your good Spirit lead me on level ground. Psalm 143:10

### “The Lord is my shepherd....is He my teacher?”

When Yeshua taught He also demonstrated His faithfulness as a compassionate shepherd. He told His disciples that when the Spirit came He would lead them into truth, teaching them, filling them, and counseling them in the ways of the LORD. Now that is a fully aware and capable Shepherd!

- Do you know your Shepherds voice? How is He speaking to you even today?
- We are all sheep in relationship to God. How can you reach out to a fellow sheep and demonstrate the shepherds compassion today?
- Read John 6:10-18 and discuss the reality of the good Shepherd and the thief. How do we know which one we are following? How does Yeshua describe Himself? Do we see Him that way? How so?



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When Yeshua went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things. (Mark 6.34)

## היום שבעה עשר לַעֲמֹר – Day Seventeen

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. Proverbs 3:5–6

### “Leaning on the everlasting arms...leaning...leaning...”

We sing about leaning on God’s arms but what does that really mean? We know that wisdom wants us to understand truth but when does our pursuit of knowledge get off track? Proverbs instructs us to seek Wisdom, to cling to Her, and to call Her our intimate companion.

How can I make wisdom a life goal without becoming proud?

- How is learning God’s wisdom more than just being able to process informations? Lord what skills or habits do I trust that you will build in me as I work on growing in wisdom?
- Push and pull are two ways people view persuasion. Wisdom seeks to persuade people and wise person to join with Her. Discuss with someone the difference between a pushy salesman and a salesman who is respected, who has “great pull.” [When I push I start with me and try to “power” my points on another. “Pull” takes more skill. It considers where a person is and seeks ways to help that person to willingly agree. Earned respect is easier to agree with.
- Read together Proverbs 2:1-19 and 26:12. What are all the active words given to those who are to get wisdom? What is the positive result after all these things are done? What happens if they are left undone? How is this leaning on God and not ourselves?



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For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding; he stores up sound wisdom for the upright; he is a shield to those who walk in integrity, guarding the paths of justice and watching over the way of his saints. (Proverbs 2.6–8 ESV)

## Day Eighteen – הַיּוֹם שְׁמוֹנָה עָשָׂר לְעֹמֶר

The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. Ecc. 12:13  
I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine. Canticles 6:3

### “When all is said and done...”

This saying continues, “there is much more said than done.” God has given us His commandments so that we would live our lives a certain way. His commandments don’t make us righteous. Does that make any sense? We are made righteous by grace through faith. In making us this way He prepares for us good works to do. How is it that we can keep His commandments with the foundation of faith?

Faith does not nullify the Law, it establishes it.

- Thinking like a soldier, how do you see the LORD as your commander-in chief? As a child of God – crying Abba Father, how do you learn to obey Him in truth?
- I command you, “Do what you are going to do today!” While this seems silly, what is it about someone commanding us that often rubs us the wrong way?
- How does these final words of Ecclesiastes describe what needs to be done “by every person?” What are the limits on enforcement of God’s Laws? How do we understand our community responsibilities in terms of learning / teaching together God’s righteous standards?



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The LORD said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, since Abraham will surely become a great and mighty nation, and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed? “For I have chosen him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him.” (Genesis 18.17–19)